

Council

Date: **18 December 2025**

Time: **3.30pm**

Venue: **Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall**

Members: **Councillors:** Grimshaw (Chair), Asaduzzaman, Atkinson, Alexander, Allen, Bagaean, Baghوث, Cattell, Czolak, Daniel, Davis, Earthey, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Galvin, Gauge, Goddard, Goldsmith, Guilmant, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Lademacher, Loughran, Lyons, Mackey, McGregor, McLeay, McNair, Meadows, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, O'Quinn, Parrott, Pickett, Robins, Robinson, Rowkins, Sankey, Shanks, Sheard, Simon, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, Thomson, West, Wilkinson, Winder and Williams.

Contact: **Anthony Soyinka**
Head of Democratic Services
01273 291006
anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk

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Chief Executive
Hove Town Hall
Norton Road
Hove BN3 3BQ

Date of Publication - Wednesday, 10 December 2025

AGENDA

Part One	Page
1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
(a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;	
(b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;	
(c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.	
In each case, you need to declare	
(i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;	
(ii) the nature of the interest; and	
(iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.	
If unsure, Members should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or Democratic Services Officer preferably before the meeting.	
2 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.	
To receive communications from the Mayor.	
3 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE CITY	7 - 10
Contact Officer: Anthony Soyinka	Tel: 01273 291006
Ward Affected: All Wards	
4 CLOSE OF MEETING	
The Mayor will move a closure motion under Council Procedure Rule 15 to terminate the meeting 4 hours after the beginning of the meeting (excluding any breaks/adjournments).	
<i>Note:</i>	
1. <i>The Mayor will put the motion to the vote and if it is carried will then:-</i>	
(a) <i>Call on the Member who had moved the item under discussion to give their right of reply, before then putting the matter to the vote, taking into account the need to put any amendments that have been moved to the vote first;</i>	
(b) <i>Each remaining item on the agenda that has not been dealt with will then be taken in the order they appear on the agenda and put to the vote without debate.</i>	
<i>The Member responsible for moving each item will be given the opportunity by the Mayor to withdraw the item or to have it voted on. If there are any amendments that have been submitted, these will be taken and voted on first in the order that they were received.</i>	
(c) <i>Following completion of the outstanding items, the Mayor will</i>	

then close the meeting.

2. *If the motion moved by the Mayor is **not carried** the meeting will continue in the normal way, with each item being moved and debated and voted on.*
3. *Any Member will still have the opportunity to move a closure motion should they so wish. If such a motion is moved and seconded, then the same procedure as outlined above will be followed.*

Once all the remaining items have been dealt with the Mayor will close the meeting.

FOR INFORMATION

The City Council actively welcomes members of the public and the press to attend its meetings and holds as many of its meetings as possible in public. Provision is also made on the agendas for public questions to committees and details of how questions can be raised can be found on the website and/or on agendas for the meetings.

The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 10:00am on the eighth working day before the meeting.

Meeting papers can be provided, on request, in large print, in Braille, on audio tape or on disc, or translated into any other language as requested.

Infra-red hearing aids are available for use during the meeting. If you require any further information or assistance, please contact the receptionist on arrival.

Webcasting notice

This meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's website. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998. Data collected during this web cast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.

Therefore, by entering the meeting room and using the seats in the chamber you are deemed to be consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for the purpose of web casting and/or Member training. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured, they should sit in the public gallery area.

Access notice

The Public Gallery is situated on the first floor of the Town Hall and is limited in size but does have 2 spaces designated for wheelchair users. The lift cannot be used in an emergency. Evac Chairs are available for self-transfer and you are requested to inform Reception prior to going up to the Public Gallery. **For your own safety please do not go beyond the Ground Floor if you are unable to use the stairs.**

Please inform staff on Reception of this affects you so that you can be directed to the Council Chamber where you can watch the meeting or if you need to take part in the proceedings e.g. because you have submitted a public question. **Attending a Council meeting held in public**

To ensure that Council meetings remain safe and accessible there are a number of measures in place. Please take note of them before and during your attendance at one of our meetings that are held in public:

Visitors are admitted on condition that they allow themselves and their belongings to be searched.

You will be asked to sign in upon arrival and may be asked to show proof of identity.

The following items are not permitted at any of our meetings:

- Sharp items e.g. knives (including Swiss army knives) scissors, cutlery and screwdrivers;
- Paint spray or similar items;
- Padlocks, chains and climbing gear;
- Items that make a noise (e.g. whistles, loud hailers, mega phones); and,
- Banners, placards and flags or similar items.

Please restrict the size of bags brought to meetings as there are no facilities for storage of bags or other personal items – all bags will be searched upon entry. You may also be subject to secondary searches once inside the meeting.

Conduct at meetings

Councillors must be able to make themselves heard on behalf of those they represent.

The Mayor or the Chair will not allow behaviour that disrupts council business.

Under the Council's Constitution, Part 3A, Council Procedure Rules 16.2 -16.3, at any meeting of the Council, the Mayor has the power to order the removal of any member of the public who:

- interrupts the proceedings
- acts in a way that impacts the proper and orderly conduct of the meeting

In the interest of order during a meeting, the Mayor may suspend or adjourn a meeting.

We would ask that you respect these arrangements for the benefit of all those attending and participating and to ensure that Council meetings are able to proceed safely in public.

Fire & emergency evacuation procedure

If the fire alarm sounds continuously, or if you are instructed to do so, you must leave the building by the nearest available exit. You will be directed to the nearest exit by council staff. It is vital that you follow their instructions:

- You should proceed calmly; do not run and do not use the lifts;
- Do not stop to collect personal belongings;
- Once you are outside, please do not wait immediately next to the building, but move some distance away and await further instructions; and
- Do not re-enter the building until told that it is safe to do so

Further information

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Anthony Soyinka, (01273 291006, email anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 3

Subject: Honorary Freedom of the City

Date of meeting: 18 December 2025

Report of: Chief Executive

Contact Officer: Name: Anthony Soyinka
Email: Anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 This report recommends that the Council confers the title of Honorary Freewoman of the City on Emily Kenward and confers the title of Honorary Freeman of the City on Mesfin Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Council admits Emily Kenward and Mesfin Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis to be Honorary Freewoman and Freeman of the City of Brighton & Hove respectively.

3. Context and background information

3.1 The title of Honorary Freewoman or Freeman is awarded to people who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent service to the city.

3.2 Emily Kenward has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to the life of our city by founding the befriending charity Time to Talk Befriending, supporting over 2,500 older, lonely and socially isolated people since its start and establishing a group of volunteers to help run the charity. Emily set up Time to Talk Befriending in December 2013 after hearing elderly people saying they felt 'invisible, forgotten and alone'.

3.3 Time to Talk Befriending charity covers the Brighton, Hove and Sussex area. Great care is taken to match lonely elderly people with suitable volunteers, ensuring they live near enough to meet each other easily. Resulting in each person having a special friend to combat the isolation and loneliness of old age. On average, the charity supports 620 people every year.

3.4 Emily Kenward founded the charity and has also established a second group of volunteers who help to run the organisation and take part in the day-to-day activities. The telephone is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Recipients say a friendly and helpful voice always telephones back with help, sympathy and reassurance. Volunteers also organise regular tea parties where the elderly can meet each other. Participants have said

they look forward to attending, enjoy it at the time and remember it with pleasure afterwards.

- 3.5 The charity sends out a quarterly newsletter and holds a monthly lunch at Woodingdean Community Centre run entirely by volunteers. There are special group meetings for those with special needs and memory workshops for those with dementia as well as improvement meetings to ensure the charity's offer is constantly evolving and listening to its users.
- 3.6 Testimonials from people who are part of the befriending network note how powerful the work of the charity is, helping them feel less alone and giving them activities to look forward to, noting friendship is a priceless gift.
- 3.7 This proposal recognises Emily's exceptional contribution to the city by positively impacting the lives of the people of Brighton & Hove, with a Freedom of the City award.
- 3.8 Emily Kenward will be the second woman to hold the title since the authority was created in 1997. Following the removal of Aung San Suu Kyi, Mary Clarke was the first woman to be awarded the honorary title of freewoman of the city in December 2023.

Mesfin Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorgis (nominated by Timothy Nichols)

- 3.9 Mesfin Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis has made an outstanding and lasting contribution to the life of our city. Throughout the 37 years he worked at the Council he was instrumental in championing race equality and was an outstanding public servant who passionately supported and promoted local democracy.
- 3.10 As a Corporate Director, Principal legal adviser and Monitoring Officer to the Council and East Sussex Fire Authority, he was diplomatic, wise and skilled at problem solving and working with elected members, senior officers and partner organisations.
- 3.11 Abraham's journey from seeking asylum in Britain in 1982 to becoming the beating heart of our civic life represents everything our city and country should offer to those seeking sanctuary. His advocacy for Black and Global Majority communities and his role as an equality champion and link with the council's Black and Minority Ethnic Workers Forum has made a difference at the Council and in the city.
- 3.12 Abraham's career included work on complex housing interventions, such as, making a control order and subsequent compulsory purchase order of a nineteen bedsit slum in the ownership of a private landlord. This was the most complex and serious housing intervention a local housing authority could make at that time and directly positively impacted the lives of residents in the city.
- 3.13 Following the formation of the unitary authority, Abraham was responsible for drafting constitutions for both committee-based and cabinet-run councils.

As principal legal adviser and Monitoring Officer to both the Council and the Fire Authority, Abraham provided legal guidance across multiple administrations. He advised minority and majority Administrations across the political spectrum. His work covering constitutional development and legal oversight within local government ensured all residents could have their say in local democracy enabling Brighton & Hove to be the vocal, active, democratic forum it is today. His incredible contribution to local democracy has been well documented: From refugee to leader in law: "I fled with nothing but the clothes on my back" | The Law Society.

3.14 This proposal recognises Abraham's exceptional contribution to the city by positively impacting the lives of the people of Brighton & Hove and enhancing the city's reputation with a Freedom of the City award.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 On 10 July 2025 the Council adopted a new policy for awarding the honorary title of the Freedom of the City. Publication of the transparent and clear policy which explains how nominations for the Freedom of the City can be made aligns with the Council Plan priority to ensure our services are easy to access, that customers are kept informed and that their views are listened to. The nominees in the report are the first to be made under the new policy.

4.2 Nominations will next be considered in Autumn 2026. The full details of how to make a nomination and the criteria and timelines for doing so can be found on the Council website.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The invitation for nominations was publicised on the Council's website and social media channels following the adoption of the new Policy in July 2025. The Leaders of the Political Groups in the Council reviewed all nominations received by the deadline in October 2025.

6. Financial implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications. The costs arising from the award of this title is expected to be met from within existing resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda
Date consulted: 10.12.2025

7. Legal implications

7.1 Section 249 (5) The Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009) enables the councils of cities to confer the status of honorary freeman/freewoman on "(a) persons of distinction and (b) persons who have, in the opinion of the council, rendered eminent services to the local area". The award of the title of Honorary Freeman has to be done by a resolution passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a meeting of the council specially

convened for the purpose. The Freedom of the City does not confer rights other than to attend formal Council meetings.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date consulted: 09.12.2025

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 There are no risk implications arising from the report.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Freedom of the City is a civic honour that can be granted by the Council to deserving recipients and is used sparingly to maintain the significance of the award. The award of the title of Freewoman of the city to Emily Kenward and Freeman of the city to Mesfin Abraham Ghebre-Ghiorghis recognises their contribution to the lives of people in Brighton and Hove and reiterates the Council's values of equality and inclusion and mission to deliver a Better Brighton & Hove for All. It was previously noted that the way the Freedom of the City had been awarded historically may not have been as open and inclusive as it should be. The new policy adopted on 10 July 2025 now ensures the process is more inclusive and transparent, inviting nominations through a clear process and timescale for consideration by Group Leaders and recommendation to full Council.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 There are no sustainability implications arising from the report.

11. Other Implications

- 11.1 There are no other significant implications arising from the report.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 The conferral of the honour of Freedom of the city is for the council to determine. Given their contributions to the City and their strong local connections, it is recommended that the Council awards the title to Emily Kenward and Mesfin Abraham-Ghebre-Ghiorghis.